

R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 019 361

UD 005 507

THE URBAN REVIEW, VOLUME 1, NUMBER 4, NOVEMBER 1966.
CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION, NEW YORK, N.Y.

PUB DATE NOV 66

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.25 HC-\$1.68 40P.

DESCRIPTORS- *URBAN EDUCATION, *PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS, *SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP, *SLUM SCHOOLS, *CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, EDUCATIONAL POLICY, SCHOOL SEGREGATION, FEDERAL PROGRAMS, EQUAL EDUCATION, COMMUNITY CHANGE, BLACK COMMUNITY, COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, SPECIAL SCHOOLS, BOARDS OF EDUCATION, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION, NEW YORK CITY, IS 201, 600 SCHOOLS

THIS ISSUE IS MADE UP OF TWO ARTICLES, AN EDITORIAL AND A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY ON NEW YORK CITY'S I.S. 201 CONTROVERSY, AND CRITICAL DIALOGUE ON PREVIOUS ARTICLES. THE FIRST ARTICLE, "FOR AN ELECTED LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD" BY JOE L. REMPSON, WRITTEN IN RESPONSE TO THE I.S. 201 CONTROVERSY, PROPOSES A PLAN FOR SYSTEMATICALLY INVOLVING THE NEGRO COMMUNITY IN THE QUEST FOR QUALITY SEGREGATED EDUCATION. THE SECOND ARTICLE, "PUBLIC AND PAROCHIAL" BY RICHARD P. BOARDMAN, DISCUSSES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC AND CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS, AND SUGGESTS THAT THE COEXISTENCE OF THE TWO SYSTEMS CREATES EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES AND IS GENERALLY DETRIMENTAL TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. IN THE SECTION OF CRITICAL DIALOGUE THERE ARE DISCUSSIONS OF THE "600 SCHOOLS" IN NEW YORK CITY AND OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. (DK)

NOVEMBER, 1966

A PUBLICATION OF THE CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

THE URBAN REVIEW

UD005567

1966 003

East
05507



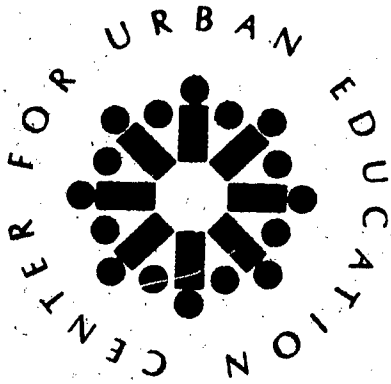
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE
PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION
POSITION OR POLICY.

For an elected local school board in New York
by Joe L. Rempson

The culturally deprived table

Public and parochial
by Richard Boardman



THE URBAN REVIEW is published bimonthly during the school year by the CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION. Its purpose is to disseminate information and to stimulate discussion on the problems and potentialities of education in the urban environment. This is in keeping with the fundamental objective of the Center, which is to contribute strategic knowledge and resources to the strengthening, improvement and reconstruction of educational services of all kinds and at all levels within urban society. *All signed articles, whether written by members of the Center staff or by others, reflect the opinions of the authors, which are not necessarily shared by the Center.* Letters, inquiries and manuscripts are welcome and should be addressed to the Editor, c/o The CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION, 33 West 42 Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.

Editor: Nelson Aldrich Designer: P. V. Norado

The CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION is an independent non-profit corporation founded in 1965 under an absolute charter from the New York State Board of Regents. In June, 1966, it was designated a Regional Educational Laboratory under Title IV of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Robert A. Dentler
Director

Lawrence R. Perkins
Associate Director, Administration

Nathan Brown
Associate Director, Educational Practices Division

Robert A. Dentler
Associate Director, Community Division

Mortimer Kreuter
Assistant Director for Development

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

John H. Fischer, President, Teachers College, Columbia University,
Chairman

Albert H. Bowker, Chancellor, The City University of New York
Robert A. Dentler, Director

Bernard E. Donovan, Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education
of the City of New York

Rev. Gerard Fagan, S.J., Assistant to the President, Fordham
University

Dr. Alfred M. Freedman, Chairman, Department of Psychiatry, New
York Medical College

Sol Gordon, Director, Project Beacon, Yeshiva University

Daniel E. Griffiths, Dean, School of Education, New York University

Herbert Hyman, Department of Sociology, Columbia University

Devereux C. Josephs, New York Life Insurance Company

John H. Niemeyer, President, Bank Street College of Education

E. R. Piore, Vice President and Chief Scientist, International Bus-
iness Machines

Harry N. Rivlin, Dean, School of Education, Fordham University

A. C. Stewart, Assistant Director, Diversified New Product Develop-
ment, Union Carbide Corporation

Roy Wilkins, Executive Director, National Association for the Ad-
vancement of Colored People

editorial

05507

Police barricades and pickets around I.S. 201 and P.S. 139 provided the only discordant notes in what was otherwise the most harmonious opening day of the New York City schools in recent years. Such was the measured comment of most educational writers in the city's newspapers.

One side of the controversy at I.S. 201—the question of the nature and control of the educational services to be offered in that strikingly designed facility—was expressed in the last issue of *The Urban Review*. We opened our pages then to a proposal suggesting “a radical redistribution of power” over the administration and curriculum of the school, to the end that responsibility for “success and failures” would be shared by the professional schoolmen and representatives of the local community. This proposal did not, of course, originate from the CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION but from one of the interested parties to the dispute, Preston Wilcox of Columbia University's School of Social Work. The fact that his proposal was on the agenda of negotiations between the Board and the local parents' groups was not our reason for publishing it. Rather, we considered his document to have a place in the historical record of the continuing dialogue over the viability of public education in urban areas.

For the same reason, we publish in this issue another essay on school-community relations. Like Mr. Wilcox, Joe L. Rempson of the CENTER staff goes beyond the tragic confrontation at I.S. 201 to address himself to the larger problem of the felt need in the inner city to restructure the relationship between the administration of educational services, the students as clients, and the parents as taxpayers. But whereas Mr. Wilcox perhaps views the matter as a community organizer who would bring education under that section of the Economic Opportunity Act — 202 (a) (3) — commonly paraphrased as “maximum participation of the poor,” Mr. Rempson rejects any proposal which would jeopardize the traditional independence of the professional educator. Instead, he suggests ways by which the schools might enlist the community's help in the education of its children and, at the same time, of itself.

However, both writers do argue for a greater degree of citizen participation in the educational system. Mr. Wilcox would achieve this by endowing a school-community council with trusteeship over the school; Mr. Rempson would democratize and enlarge the

powers of the local district school board. Each, in his way, is responding to manifest discontinuities between big-city school systems and the communities they attempt to serve; and each, in his way, aims to reduce the gap between promise and performance in the education of disadvantaged children. Elsewhere, too, these problems are being dealt with in similar fashion. In Rochester, New York, community action groups are demanding a measure of control over educational services. And among various groups in the Negro slums, most notably in Boston, there is an increasing openness to the suggestion made by Christopher Jencks that the public school is “obsolete” and that educational forms should be abandoned to the natural selectivity of a free market fed by local initiative or corporate enterprise.

It happens, and not fortuitously, that many of these proposals to upgrade the level and relevance of instruction by means of increased community participation are linked with a more or less fatalistic acceptance of continued segregation in the schools. The CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION welcomes these views in *The Urban Review* without endorsing them in any other sense than that they merit consideration. For, out of the tangled issue of school-community relations in the slums, it seems likely that a demand for “quality segregated education” will gain increased currency—even among those who, like the parents at I.S. 201, were only yesterday calling for “integration now.”

It should be made clear, however, that the CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION does not consider that segregation of any kind is part of a worthy vision of the future of American education. It is committed to the pursuit, however long and difficult, of quality integrated education.

Yet “quality segregated education,” sometimes with overtones of a cultural vigilantism born of despair, represents a response to the immediate context of present demographic patterns and the obduracy of white society in denying full inclusion in that society to the Negro. The views on quality segregated education of Messrs Wilcox and Rempson, though very different in program and purpose, are still part of the contemporary moment in the continuing discussion of the future of education in urban society. *The Urban Review* is intended to reflect that discussion.

For an elected local school board

JOE L. REMPSON

Joe L. Rempson is a Research Assistant in the Community Division of the Center for Urban Education.

A fundamental fact of our time is that despite all the emphasis on integrated education, "separation of the races," as U.S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe II authoritatively reports, "is on the *increase* [my italics] in our city schools."¹ I take this to have at least two implications.

The first is that we have no practical recourse other than to concentrate on bringing about quality segregated education, which is here defined as an academic achievement level for the disadvantaged child that is comparable to national standards. Either we attempt to do so in the school where the disadvantaged child is or, given the educational demands of our society, we abandon him to a life of misery or mediocrity—more likely, both.

The second is that the school itself cannot be reasonably expected to achieve large-scale integrated education,² particularly in the central cities. It has had over a decade to do so and what has occurred during this period is not increased integrated education, but as just indicated, the precise opposite. And I, for one, do not blame the school for this. The school cannot eliminate segregated housing. The school cannot stop the flight to the suburbs. Nor can the school abolish the racial prejudice of adults. The school, in short, is powerless to change those surface and subtle conditions which are responsible for segregated education. Only

society, that is, individual citizens, private organizations, public bodies, business, and government—all acting in concert—can change these conditions. And society will not—perhaps even cannot—be outmaneuvered by the school. My conclusion: our success in achieving large-scale integrated education will be a function, not of what the school does, but of what society opts to do.

Even given large-scale integrated education, there is little basis in fact, or in logic, for feeling that the problem of low academic achievement of the disadvantaged child will accordingly vanish. My belief is that the main source of the problem lies in the home and neighborhood environment of the child, and since integrated education can hardly be expected to help alter that environment, it is—of itself—unlikely to make a significant contribution to solving the problem of achieving quality education for him.

I submit, therefore, that the crucial problem confronting the central city school is not how to achieve integrated education, although this is a major *societal* problem, but instead how to accomplish quality education.

This position does not mean that I think the school should abandon or even diminish its quest for integrated education. Whereas I do not visualize this endeavor as meeting with any measurable success or, even if it does, significantly affecting quality education for the disadvantaged child, I contend that it is worth pursuit as an end in itself since it could help a significant few to move closer toward a common humanity.

Amid all the demands for integrated education, some schools have not ignored the distinct need for quality segregated education. They are trying to determine, for example, what such largely school-centered experimental efforts as curriculum adaptations, special teacher training, and the education of the pre-school child can contribute to its solution. Extending their professional borders, they are also giving noticeable, if limited, atten-

tion to the role that the individual parent can play in this endeavor. What, generally, these schools are failing to do is to focus corresponding concentration on how the total school community might be systematically enlisted in the drive for quality education. When the school has ventured into this area, its emphasis has commonly been on coordinating the relevant activities of various local organizations (as, for example, in Wilmington, Delaware) or simply trying to enlist the aid of these organizations (as, for example, in Indianapolis, Indiana). And relevant discussion in this domain has been largely confined to the perceived value-conflict between school and community.

Against this background, I offer my thoughts on how the Negro community might be systematically involved in the quest for quality segregated education. I do so convinced that much of what I have to say has import for school-community relations in any community, be that community Negro, Puerto Rican, white, or whatever; or be it central city, suburban, or rural. I focus on the Negro community because for most schools in our country, to slightly paraphrase a popular expression, "that is where the problem is."

I take as my reference point a provocative and controversial proposal advanced by Preston Wilcox, Assistant Professor, Columbia School of Social Work, New York City, for the "fundamental restructuring of the relations between school and community based on a radical redistribution of power." I do this because the thinking behind the Wilcox proposal is so widely shared and because this thinking and Wilcox's programmatic en-

¹ From a speech given by Commissioner Howe at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, May 3, 1966, and published in the June, 1966, issue of *The Urban Review*.

² "Large-scale integrated education" is here arbitrarily defined as a situation in which, say, 51 percent or over of the schools in a district would have student bodies whose racial composition closely approximate the proportionate racial mix of the entire school district. This criterion would apply to central cities only. For smaller areas, all or practically all, the schools would have to meet this criterion.

For an elected local school board in new york

capsulation of it warrant consideration in any serious exploration of the possibilities for improving central city schools through cooperative school-community action.

Wilcox's "radical redistribution of power" would consist of having a school run by a School-Community Committee composed of "parents, local leaders and professionals in educational or social science fields who would be drawn from the community or outside it, if necessary." The parents of the school would elect the Committee, whose main powers would be "selecting and supportively guiding the principal" and exercising "extensive review functions."

It would have access to all reports sent by school administrators to the District Supervisor and the Board of Education [although having general application, Wilcox's reference here is to a school in the New York City school system], and it would be empowered to hold open meetings to which parents and teachers would be invited to present their suggestions or complaints. Additionally, it would have the responsibility of providing a continuous review of the curriculum to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs and experience of the students and that it be sufficiently demanding to bring out their best possible performance.

Wilcox rests his proposal on the hypothesis "that a community can organize effectively around the process of educating its children and that it has the capacity to intervene directly in that process."

How sound is this hypothesis? Does it, with regard to any community, provide a defensible basis on which to build a program of school-community relations that will contribute significantly to quality education?

I do not think so. "That a community can organize effectively around the process of educating its children," I agree. But that, beyond this, "it has the capacity to intervene *directly* [my italics] in that process," I do not agree. The problem of "selecting and supportively guiding the principal," which Wilcox

contends should be the prerogative of the School-Community Committee, is one to which even the most sophisticated and dedicated professionals have no ready satisfactory solution. Certainly, then, it requires a level of critical judgment and general professional competence that cannot be expected of a lay committee whose members, unlike professional educators, would invariably have to devote the major part of their time to non-educational concerns. Specialization in an age of ever-increasing knowledge is, after all, not just a necessity; it is also a virtue. If, further, such a lay committee cannot be expected to select and guide a principal, neither can it be expected to exercise the equally demanding "extensive review functions" that Wilcox would have it assume.

Wilcox seems to be confusing the right to operate an educational enterprise with the capacity to do so. History is instructive here. Local school boards *have* the right to do what Wilcox would have a School-Community Committee do, and in the early days of the public school they exercised that right. But as education became more complex, these school boards surrendered their professional functions to what today we call the Superintendent of Schools. Thus the only precedent I know which supports the Wilcox hypothesis is one that was voluntarily discarded as unworkable by the very body that set it.

When we turn to the two principal benefits claimed by Wilcox for his proposal, we predictably find them no more tenable than his hypothesis. First, he thinks that by placing the school directly under the control of community representatives, good human relations would result between the school and the community, since responsibility for successes and failures would be shared and the shifting of blame thereby precluded. This is possible, but is it important? As Robert Dentler stated in a reply to Wilcox, good human relations is not synonymous with quality education.

Second, since under his plan the school would become

accountable to the community, it could consequently be expected to reflect what schools in more advantaged areas already mirror: the norms of that particular community. The virtue of this, as he sees it, is that the distribution of rewards and punishments would be altered from almost exclusive emphasis on dress and comportment to stress on "rewards . . . derived from one's obligation to his peers and community." This change, he argues, would provide a secure, supportive environment in which the disadvantaged child might academically prosper.

That such a classroom environment is required for satisfactory learning is more fact than opinion, but I am not sure of what these rewards "derived from one's obligation to his peers and his community" would come to mean in reality. He, together with the many who share his views, seems to say to the teacher:

Accept, or at least co-exist, with whatever mode of dress the disadvantaged child wears; ignore whatever profanity he speaks; let him fight whenever he chooses; do not bother him if he comes to class without paper and pencil; leave him alone if he does not do his homework; let him talk and throw paper if he wants; allow him to get out of his seat when he wishes and even roam the hallways if he is so inclined; give in to him when he does not want to open a book and study; do not insist that he be on time, that he behave properly when the class lines up for, say, the auditorium or a fire drill; disregard it if he writes all over his desk or even cuts it; and if he turns in sloppy work—well, forget it! In sum, let him be. Don't impose upon him these middle-class values. Instead reward him for *his* values—values which are more peer- and community- rather than school-oriented. This may stimulate him to learn.

To me this is like saying forget about addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and go on and teach arithmetic. Although this may be an extreme interpretation of the position that Wilcox represents, I think it does point out the difficulty of determining just what that position really is. Undoubtedly the value-conflict thesis has served and continues to serve a construc-

tive purpose by helping educators to realize, and slowly but increasingly act upon, the need to take into account the influences of cultural forces in the teaching-learning process. But if the problem were as simple as the value-conflict school makes it appear, then conceivably it could be easily solved. What teacher of the disadvantaged, so frequently beset by feelings of frustration, failure, and fatigue, would not be willing to accept the values of the disadvantaged child if this in turn were to result in the child's school success?

As I see it, to take the Wilcox approach is to champion an educational revolution for the mere sake of good human relations and school acceptance of community norms. These are goals which could not in themselves, to whatever degree accomplished, be expected to make a measurable contribution to the achievement of the end sought: quality education. I do not question that school communities in the depressed areas of our central cities both can and should play a greater role in helping to improve their schools, but Wilcox and I differ on what, properly, that role both can and should be.

But here let me pause. For I feel compelled to make crystal clear what I intimated earlier, which is that, *in the absence of concomitant fundamental community changes*, I do not think that quality segregated education can be accomplished. I do not look to the school alone to solve the problem of low academic achievement by its disadvantaged students, any more than I look to the school alone to solve the problem of segregated education. I perceive this problem, too, as a social problem, the root of which lies in the socioeconomic fabric of the community—particularly in the economic insecurity and the related inability of its inhabitants to translate educational aspirations into day-to-day striving. The strategic focus in the drive for quality segregated education must, therefore, not be solely—or even centrally—on the school, but, like the drive for integrated education, primarily

For an elected local school board in new york

on the community. That is, it must be on that sector of society where those conditions exist which so largely shape both the in- and out-of-school life of the child.

I thus perceive the problems of segregated education and inferior segregated education as similar in that they have their roots in community conditions. But, as for what this means for the school, I see a decided difference between the two. As I have said, I do not think that the school can do much about the various factors responsible for segregated education. But with regard to changing those community conditions that are responsible (in my opinion) for *inferior* segregated education, I think that the school can do a great deal. For it has the powers to educate and stimulate, and through the full and effective use of these powers, I believe that it can transform them into forces for change—and do it without vainly trying to outmaneuver society. It can, for example, teach parents and other citizens basic education, child development, cultural history, and job and leadership skills; and through this teaching, it can at once stimulate more socially-productive interests by these parents and other citizens in themselves, their children, and their neighborhood, and help enable them to translate this interest into positive action.

So having focused so much attention on one of the agencies that could help solve the problem of the low achievement of the disadvantaged child—the school, we should now focus equally serious attention on another agency that could help remedy it—the community. Is there not at least as much truth in the other side of the story, which says that the low academic achievement of the disadvantaged child is traceable to his low academic motivation, and that this low academic motivation is in turn traceable to the deleterious community conditions under which he lives? Indeed, whatever we think of James Conant's recommendations in *Slums and Suburbs*, are we committed to ignoring,

the lesson that he learned in the course of his research? "*The lesson is that to a considerable degree what a school should do and can do is determined by the status and ambitions of the families being served*" [Conant's italics]

It is with this central, pervasive consideration before me that I offer below a school-community relations program designed inclusively to help achieve quality segregated education in our central city schools.

I make this proposal with the thought that a school system might implement it on an experimental basis in a single school zone or other school subdivision, subject, of course, to the most sophisticated possible evaluation research.

This proposal, which in a few instances draws from the Wilcox proposal, derives from seven basic beliefs, the first four of which summarize what has been stated.

1. Public education should, indeed must, be professionally controlled.
2. The depressed communities in our central cities can and should play a greater role in helping to improve their schools.
3. To bring about quality segregated education, a concerted attack is required on both school and community problems in depressed areas; and *it is only through such an attack that such education can be achieved.*
4. The school can help to solve those community problems that are related to inferior segregated education. Even the very fact of providing for and aggressively encouraging the meaningful participation of the community in school affairs might enhance the instrumental value placed on education by the community.
5. Each agency should restrict itself to those activities for which it is best equipped and can thus most effectively per-

form. For the school this means limiting its efforts to educational activities. (Note: The few and insignificant successes of the community school, which has undertaken the most highly-touted attempts to make the school an agency for community improvement, attest to the almost total futility of the school as an instrument for community change through civic activities.)

6. Overcentralization is a malady of our time, one reflection of it being evident in the distant relationship between school and community, especially in depressed neighborhoods where the relationship has never been close to begin with. Appropriate school reform should be accordingly instituted.
7. Our task must be to improve and, where possible, adjust old structures to meet new or newly discovered needs rather than continue the proliferation of agencies and institutions.

In accordance with these beliefs and taking New York City as a projected prototype, I suggest, first, that the local school board be elected by citizens of the school district. The Board should consist of seven members instead of its present nine members, a change which I think would make for its more efficient functioning. All members would serve four-year terms, with their term of office being so staggered that at each election four seats would be open. No member would serve more than two terms or ten years. Membership requirements would be simple: age 21 or over and residence in the school district. Candidates would be self-selected, having only to file a declaration of intent with the Election Board and at some point personally appear before the Board to have their candidacy verified. Although it might function through *ad hoc* committees, the Election Board would be composed of all PA and PTA presidents in the district.

Since this procedure conceivably could result in a plethora of candidates, a method is needed to narrow the field. I would

recommend that, in the style of the primary and general election system, there be a first and final election. In the first election, a district candidate would be chosen by the citizens in that school neighborhood. In the final election, these district candidates would vie for local board membership. Of course, it could be that even this procedure might produce too many candidates, in which case a more practical approach would be to divide the school district into election zones with one candidate from each zone.

All district candidates and their views would be widely publicized through printed bulletins, street corner forums, in-school meetings, closed circuit television specials (these specials to be carried in the places where the people are or can easily gather, such as sidewalks, bars, churches, homes, and school buildings), and any other method that would constitute effective publicity.

Rather than being the burden of the candidates, financial and programmatic responsibilities for this "sponsored publicity" would be charged to a specially formed publicity committee composed of paid lay and professional functionaries. This committee would be appointed cooperatively by the district-community coordinator (whose job is described below) and the Election Board. Publicity in addition to that sponsored by the committee would be solely the responsibility of the candidates. Committee consultants, perhaps one for each candidate, would give the candidates help in formulating their written views and in making oral presentations.

Sponsored publicity for the school candidates (or, in case election zones are set up, zone candidates) would be handled by the School-Community Committee, whose duties are described below. Money would be provided it for this purpose.

Prior to the election campaign, district candidates would have to participate in a training workshop lasting anywhere from

For an elected local school board in new york

two weeks to a month. In this workshop, they would be, among other things, taught the duties, rights, and responsibilities of a board member and familiarized with pertinent particulars about the schools in their district and about the school system. Above all, they would engage in systematically-planned on-site observations of the schools in their district and of other selected schools in the city and throughout the country (and this includes private and parochial schools), the aim of these observations being to give them a working perspective on educational practices and procedures. The logic here is that the campaign should function as much to educate and constructively stimulate the community as to provide for its meaningful participation in the educational process. The workshop would be planned and conducted by the publicity committee, the Election Board, and those board members not up for re-election.

During their term of office, all board members would have to participate annually in similar one-week workshops, which would include such basic things as instruction in parliamentary procedure and record keeping. Integral to the rationale for both the pre-campaign and in-service workshops is that an alert school board will choose an alert superintendent and, so long as he remains alert, support him.

The workshop expenses of board members would be paid by the Central Board, as would be an amount equal to the normally-received income that the members might forego because of their full-time participation in the workshops. The District-Community Planning and Coordinating Committee, described be-

low, would, where necessary, arrange a "service leave" with the employers of the board members.

The main powers of the local school board, which now serves as little more than an elaborate public relations façade, would be to appoint the Assistant District Superintendent and, within the scope of Central School Board policy, formulate—upon the recommendation of the Assistant District Superintendent—such regulations as are appropriate for its district. It might opt, for example, to use as a textbook Arna Bontemps's *Story of the Negro*, to have its schools teach sex education, to permit corporal punishment under certain conditions, and to require its schools to refer to Muslim children by their Muslim names.

The Assistant District Superintendent would be chosen by the board from an eligible list of candidates supplied by the Central School Board. This list would be made up of persons who have applied directly to the Central Board as well as of persons recommended for consideration by the local school board. In short, all candidates would have to be approved by the Central School Board. The final selection from among those on the list, however, would be left solely up to the local school board. Where an impasse developed over the names included on the approved list, the Central Board would have the final say, for although over-centralization should be avoided, in a day of many common and overlapping problems, so should rampant decentralization.

The appeal and prestige that such powers as the above would give the local school board, together with the sponsored publicity of its campaigns, would, I think, secure participation

sufficient to make the election process viable and meaningful. It certainly provides for the shared school-community accountability that is such a laudable aspect of the Wilcox proposal.

The Assistant District Superintendent would act as agent of the local school board and would serve at its discretion. One of his primary responsibilities would be the selection of the principals of his district. Although no single method of making such selections insures getting the best possible persons for the job, the civil-service approach now employed by the Central Board precludes maximizing this possibility. On the contrary, this approach discourages many potentially creative leaders from even attempting to enter the system. Nevertheless, since the present method also results in getting good leaders, I do not recommend abolishing it. I do say that it should be streamlined and the selection procedure broadened. Performance on the examinations, together with other current requirements, might be the sole selection criterion for, say, 50 percent of the principalships (and this includes assistant principalships). The Assistant District Superintendent would be responsible for the selection of the remaining 50 percent, who would have to meet the minimum official non-examination criteria of the Central Board. This 50 percent would be composed of those who made unsatisfactory scores on the modified Central Board examination, those recommended by reputable institutions and individuals, and those discovered through a nationwide talent search.

A second basic responsibility of the Assistant District Superintendent would be the appointment of teachers. The proce-

ture employed in their selection would be identical to that used in the selection of principals, who would play an important part in this function by having the power to recommend teaching candidates to the Assistant District Superintendent. On its part, the Central Board, as in the case of principals, needs to streamline its teacher-examination procedures.

A third major responsibility of the Assistant District Superintendent would be to appoint a district-community coordinator to be in charge of school-community relations for the district.

Enhancing the role of the district-community coordinator would be a District-Community Planning and Coordinating Committee consisting of the Assistant District Superintendent, the district-community coordinator, the school-community coordinators, and representatives from business and various private and public agencies. This group would be responsible for initiating and coordinating *all* public and public-related activities in the community. *In particular, it would coordinate job training with job opportunities.* The committee would be directed by a paid, full-time professional from the newly created Human Resources Administration, with the help of such other staff members as he deemed necessary. The city government would bear the operating cost.

Below the district-community coordinator would be the school-community coordinators, one for each school in the district. These men or women would (1) provide opportunities for community participation in the operations of the school and (2) see

that, in a maximum effort to help improve community conditions, the school fully employs such educational activities as its aggressively solicited resources permit. Also he himself would, when appropriate, sponsor educational activities.

As an instrument whereby the community might systematically participate in the operation of the school, the school-community coordinator, in cooperation with the PA or PTA, would choose a School-Community Committee consisting of, say, fifteen members. Eight of these members would represent various community organizations and the remaining seven, chosen through a method similar to that used in selecting juries, would represent the unorganized in the community. The day and evening principals, the guidance counselors, special service personnel (e.g., psychologist and attendance teacher), and a teacher representative from each grade level unit (e.g., primary and intermediate grade levels) would be ex-officio members of the Committee. A main function of the Committee would be to formulate annually, and then recommend to the school staff, specific goals to be sought for that year, such as improvement in school discipline and in pupils' health habits. The school staff would have the option of rejecting or accepting these goals with or without modifications. Through its representatives on the Committee, the school staff could similarly recommend to the Committee goals that it would like to see cooperatively sought. In ways decided by the Committee, the community would assist in working for the goals adopted by the staff and in evaluating the degree to which they are

achieved. The extent to which the Committee further became involved in curricular matters would have to be determined by the school staff, including the school-community coordinator, as occasion demanded. Other functions of the Committee would be to help, probably through *ad hoc* subcommittees, in the promotion, administration, and supervision of after-school and weekend programs in ways deemed appropriate by the Committee as a whole. The Committee would *not* concern itself with such non-educational matters as police brutality and the operation of the welfare system. Other agencies and organizations, perhaps stimulated by the Committee, could be expected to carry such burdens as these more effectively. In all matters, the school-community coordinator would act as agent of the Committee. Like local school board members, Committee members would have to participate in training workshops.

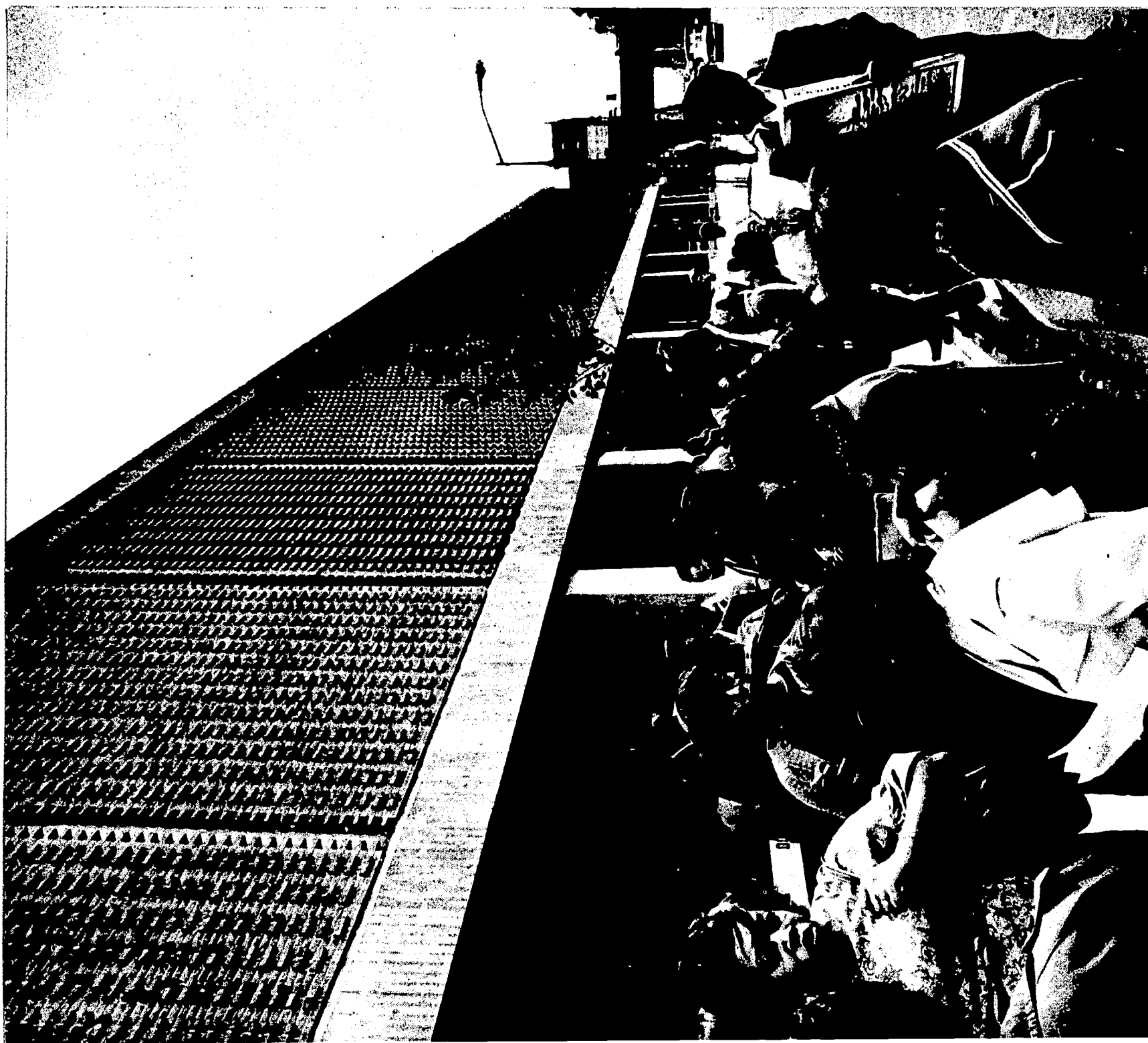
In his effort to make the school an agency for community improvement, the coordinator would be responsible for conducting a parent education program (most logically as part of an adult education program). The more *comprehensive* adult education program would come under the district-wide administration of an adult education specialist, appointed by the Assistant District Superintendent, and the school administration of an evening adult education principal (for whom, incidentally, this would be a full-time job). All in-school activities (excluding, of course, the regular day-school program for pupils) would have to be planned cooperatively, however, by the day principal, the evening princi-

pal and the school-community coordinator.

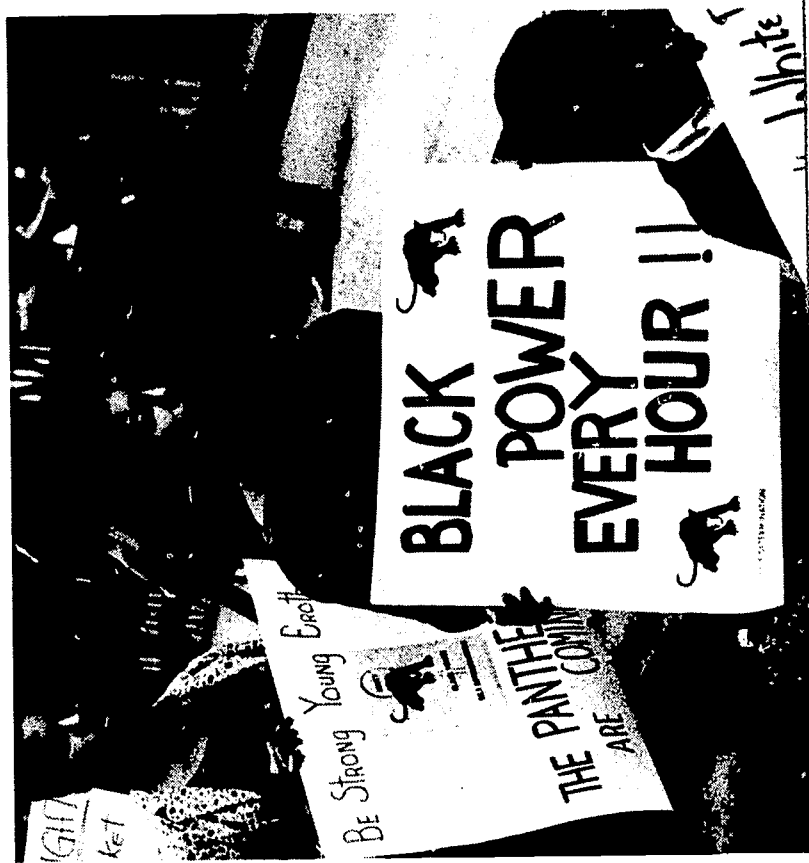
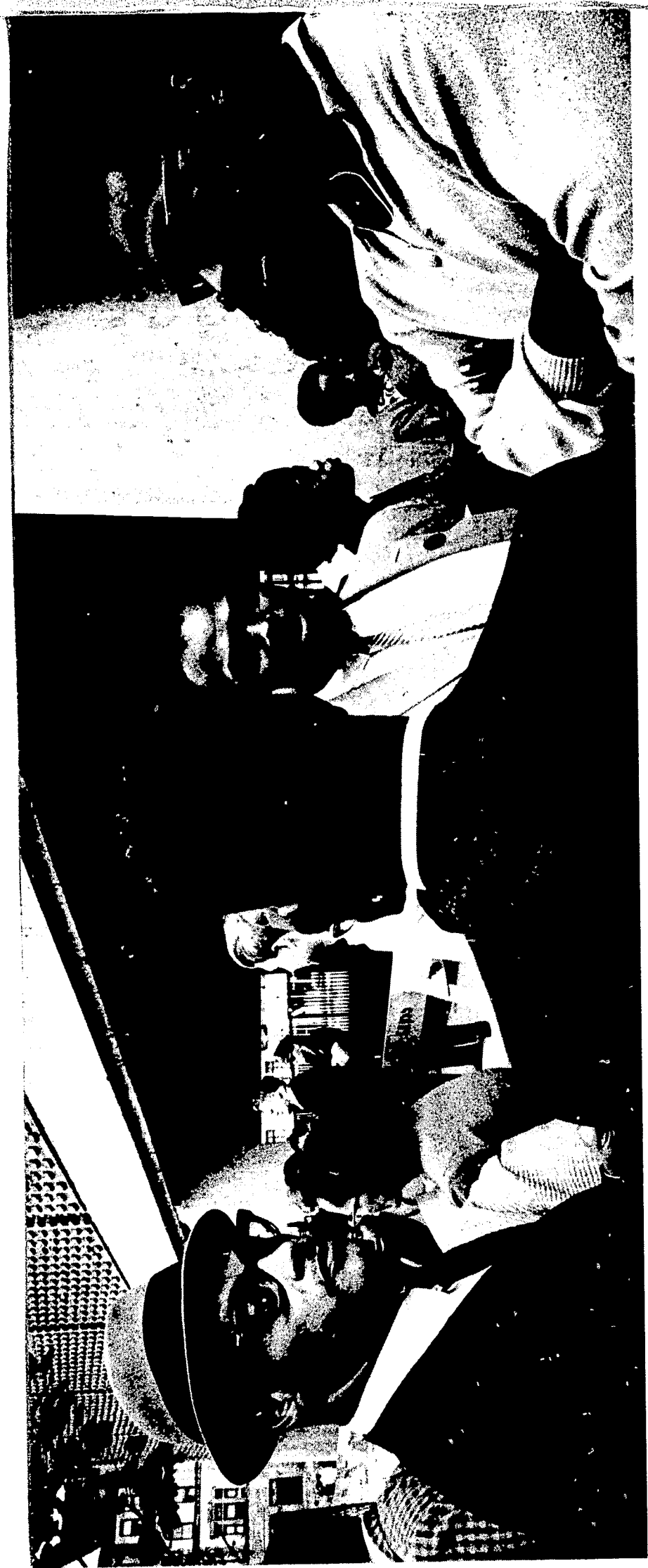
This, then, is my proposal for systematically involving the Negro community, both as participant and target, in the quest for quality segregated education. I have no illusions that it, any more than Wilcox's proposal, is *the* approach which will make that quest successful. Although some organizational schemes will be more instrumental than others in achieving this goal, no organizational scheme *per se* will do the job. Getting the job done will depend more on the resources available to those who, acting in concert, have the will and the intelligence to do it. Even more, it will depend on the responsiveness of those for whom the effort is made. So, in the fashion of the late Adlai Stevenson, let's talk sense to the parents and citizens in depressed communities. Let's tell them the truth, that there are no gains without pains, that there are no easy solutions, that we are in the midst of times calling for great self-sacrifices—less time for ourselves and more time for our children; less money to spend and thus more to save; less time for leisure and thus more time for study and work—and that in the absence of such sacrifices, standard pupil achievement and the cycle of poverty of which it is a part will indeed continue to be our implacable enemy for years to come.

I.S. 201





Photographs by James Hinton





Public and parochial

RICHARD P. BOARDMAN

Richard P. Boardman is a Research Sociologist in the Community Division of the Center for Urban Education.

Any consideration of the educational services available to an urban community must take into account the relationship between the public and private school systems. In most cities outside the deep South (excepting Louisiana) the private sector is, of course, dominated by those schools set up under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. Taking the U.S. school population as a whole, 28 percent is being educated in these Church-supported institutions.

The place of the religiously oriented school in American polity has long been an issue among us, although, historically, the debate has rarely attained the ideological virulence which has characterized, for example, the French experience. Recently, however, the relationship between the two systems has been brought into increasingly sharp focus by two relatively new factors in the social-political context. The first has been the implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I) which provides Federal funds for the education of the children of the poor regardless of whether they attend public or private schools. The constitutional prohibition against state support of any religious institution would not be violated, according to supporters of Title I, because the funds were to be spent in aid of *children*, not schools. This argument is now being tested in the courts.

The second factor to have highlighted the need for an examination of public/parochial school interactions is, of course,

the issue of racial segregation. Observers of urban educational problems have become interested in the question of whether the church school is being perceived by Catholic parents as a refuge from the threat or reality of desegregation in the public school.

Indeed, this essay is an outgrowth of a larger study of segregation in one medium-sized northern city. Although our observations and analyses are confined to one setting, I am confident that the city in question is not atypical of many urban communities in the North. But my aim here is a modest one: to present a rough description of the relationship of two school systems, the public and the parochial, in terms of their structures, functions and impact upon the nature and distribution of educational services in this area. To be sure, it will be readily apparent that from the perspective of total educational and social planning, this relationship has implications which strike at a continuing problem in our history, the preservation of individual rights and freedoms in the development of the good society. But my purpose now is simply to provide a preliminary analysis of the situation in one city in the hope that it will generate further studies leading to somewhat less tentative conclusions. Discretion dictates the invented name of Mittelville, but readers, critical or otherwise, are invited to request further details.

DIMENSIONS

In 1965 there were 18 parochial elementary schools in Mittelville with an enrollment of approximately 8,200 pupils in grades one through eight, a stable population for the last five years. In addition, there were four parochial high schools with approximately 2,100 pupils, bringing the total parochial school enrollment for the city to 10,300. The non-white ethnic compo-

sition of this parochial school population cannot be determined exactly, but the available data suggest that it is not unlike that of other urban areas of the North, i.e., approximately 5 percent Negro and perhaps 2 percent Puerto Rican.

The public school system is made up of 36 elementary (k-8) schools and three high schools containing 18,000 and 6,400 youngsters respectively, making for a total population more than double that of the parochial system. Both elementary and high school populations have shown a slight decline over the past five years. Thirty percent of the public school enrollment is Negro and another 12 percent is Puerto Rican. The percentage of nonwhites in the public school population has increased approximately 2 percent per year for the past ten years.

Public and parochial school enrollments and ethnic compositions reflect total city population and ethnic composition figures. It is estimated, for example, that of a total city population of 158,000 more than 60 percent are Catholic. Negroes make up approximately 14 percent of the total population, while Puerto Ricans constitute another 4 percent. One can assume that upwards of 95 percent of the Negro population is non-Catholic, and perhaps as much as 50 percent of the Puerto Rican population is functionally non-Catholic. Parochial education leaders in Mittelville estimate that only half the Catholic school-aged population attends parochial schools, and, as we have suggested earlier, upwards of 90 percent of this population is white.

This description of the public and parochial school populations will take on additional meaning later in the essay when we consider the range of educational services available to the various sectors of the city's school-aged population. At this point, however, let me simply suggest that the benefits of both school systems are available to only one segment of the school-aged population, namely the Catholic youngsters.

Prior to 1951 the parochial school system could best be described as a collection of relatively independent elementary schools. After 1951, however, the diocese took a more active role in the operation and development of the school system. In so doing, the diocese, in effect, became the centralized administrative arm of the system. Located outside the city limits, the diocesan office now controls all of the parochial schools in the county and directs all program development and planning. Yet communication between the central diocesan office and its local administrative unit is minimal, and flows essentially in one direction, from the former to the latter.

The major thrust of the parochial system's development since 1951 has occurred at the secondary school level where the need for facilities and program has been most urgent. While there is presently no real enrollment pressure on the parochial system, some overcrowding exists periodically at the elementary level in certain areas of the city. Overcrowding, however, is resolved by redefining the attendance zones or redistributing the pupil population. In fact, the parochial system has considerably more flexibility in dealing with enrollment pressures than does the public system because of the former's organization on a county basis. County organization allows division, reorganization, and distribution across city lines, a luxury the public school system is not afforded. The parochial schools also consistently maintain larger class sizes than does the public system. It is not uncommon to find parochial school classrooms with 40 or more youngsters, although that same figure would be a measure of extreme overcrowding in the public school.

In addition, the parochial system supports a small number of schools firmly rooted in the cultural background of a particular immigrant group. For example, there are in Mittelville Armenian, Slovak, and Polish parochial schools which attract

students from the entire county as well as from the city itself. These schools are frequently older and more overcrowded than the other strictly neighborhood schools. Thus, it is possible for the enrollment figures of the parochial school system to show both overall stability of population and some overcrowding. This apparent statistical inconsistency can be explained in terms of the county-wide pupil attendance patterns and the presence of the culturally based schools.

The public school system below the high school level is organized on the basis of strict "neighborhood" attendance. This means that the average elementary school contains approximately 400 pupils, all of whom are drawn from the immediate area, normally less than half a mile in diameter. Two-thirds of these schools operate at less than capacity. The remainder are overcrowded. Overcrowding occurs most frequently, of course, in areas of rapid population growth; commonly these are the same areas that contain high concentrations of Negroes and Puerto Ricans. The school construction policy is also dictated by the neighborhood orientation which necessitates tacking new facilities to old or building new plants on the same site. Only within the past five years have new plants been constructed to house 800 pupils or more (this in response to increasing population density in certain neighborhoods in the city).

The public school system of Mittelville is headed by an elected Board of Education representing both major political parties. The administrative staff of the school system is led by the superintendent and two assistant superintendents who are in charge of the primary and secondary levels. Other divisions direct various special services such as guidance, testing, psychological, health, curriculum, and planning. The offices of the administrative staff are centrally located in the City Hall building.

There are approximately 950 public school teachers, 675

of whom teach at the elementary school level. Less than 10 percent is Negro, and the median experience of all elementary teachers is approximately ten years. The majority of the teachers come from nearby state teachers colleges, although there is an increasing effort to obtain teachers, mostly specialists, from more distant points. The rate of teacher turnover in the public system for any given year is approximately 5 percent for all causes including death and retirement. A pool of over 100 substitute teachers is maintained and utilized throughout the school year. Of the parochial school teachers approximately 30 percent are lay people. The remaining 70 percent are Catholic sisters. The parochial, like the public, system is faced with some shortage of qualified elementary level teachers. Both systems are stepping up recruitment procedures at this level. The parochial system, in particular, is rapidly expanding its teacher training facilities to meet the need for teachers at all levels.

POINTS OF CONTACT

The present relationship between the public and parochial school systems is described somewhat differently by representatives of both systems. For, while Catholic leaders suggest that the relationship is uniformly cordial, public educators are less clear, characterizing the relationship in some instances as either non-existent or parasitic.

The nature of the relationship can be demonstrated easily, however, since the points of contact between the two systems, though limited, are clearly of primary benefit to the parochial system. One main point of contact, for example, is the parochial school child's access to the public system's psychological counseling and referral services. The parochial system uses these

services as they need them, which is usually no more than 10 or 15 times a year. The public schools' manual training and home economics teachers and facilities are also available to seventh and eighth grade parochial youngsters, who attend once a week at scheduled times through the school year. Both systems share the public health services provided by the city. These services include nurses and periodic health checkups, shots, etc. Within the past year, public Head Start programs and facilities have also been made available to Catholic youngsters in a predominantly Puerto Rican section of the city.

A released-time program in operation for about five years has recently been discontinued. The program whereby Catholic youngsters in the public school system were released one half day per week to attend religious classes in the Catholic schools appears to have failed primarily from lack of interest and from inconvenience for the Catholic families. The initiative for participation in the program rested entirely with the Catholic parent and no transport services were made available by either public or parochial systems. No formal program of released-time instruction currently exists in the city.

The Catholic schools offer no program in vocational education or home economics; therefore, parochial youngsters who desire such programs must obtain them from the only source available, the public system. By the same token, the Catholic system offers no kindergarten or nursery program and those Catholic parents who value this experience for their children must utilize the public school system at that point. The significantly higher percentage of whites in the public schools at the kindergarten level suggests that a substantial number of Catholic parents are taking their option to send their youngsters to the public system.

The offerings of both systems also brings about a situation which generates a difficult problem for the public system at a

Public and parochial

higher grade level. In the beginning of each school year, approximately 40 percent of the eighth grade pupils from each system transfer to the other system. Parochial school youngsters not qualified or destined for the predominantly academic program of the Catholic secondary schools return to the public school system, frequently without adequate transcripts of past performance. At the same time, a similar number of Catholic youngsters in the public schools transfer to the parochial system to obtain the academic benefits of the college-bound program. The consequences of this change-over of pupils are most strongly felt in the public system, which must invest extra effort to meet the individual needs of larger groups of less able youngsters. The parochial system, on the other hand, receives better qualified youngsters who, in theory at least, are more highly motivated and have more harmonious educational goals. The shift of youngsters at this grade level helps the Catholic system to maintain an image of academic excellence at the secondary level.

Catholic education leaders recognize that the public image of the parochial secondary school is clearly that of college preparation. They argue at the same time, however, that the image is largely a myth since the programs of the public and parochial schools are virtually identical, with perhaps the exception that the parochial system omits vocational and homemaking programs. This argument is perhaps correct in principle, yet practice does not support it. In the parochial system, for example, we find that upwards of 50 percent of the youngsters are enrolled in the honors and college preparatory programs. The public school, on the other hand, offers no honors program and less than 30 percent of the youngsters are enrolled in the college preparatory program. Figure 1 shows how this enrollment distribution breaks down across the range of services offered by both systems.

Figure 1. Percent distribution of public and parochial secondary school system enrollment across college and non-college program offerings.

		Program offerings	
Parochial System % Enrollment		College	Non-College
		<input type="checkbox"/> 50%	<input type="checkbox"/> 50%
Public System % Enrollment		<input type="checkbox"/> 30%	<input type="checkbox"/> 70%

It should be clear from this figure that, though the program may be described similarly, the actual orientation in terms of enrollment distribution is noticeably dissimilar.

The program and services offered by the parochial system may or may not be superior to public school services, especially at the secondary level. On the one hand, for example, the parochial system appears to be under no real pressure to obtain qualified teachers, and although there are normally more teachers available at the secondary school level, the teacher/pupil ratio in the parochial high schools is often over 40 to one. On the other hand, the population distribution options available to the system allow sufficient flexibility to juggle both teachers and students to eliminate any serious shortage of personnel or facilities. Objective evaluation of the quality of the parochial system relative to the public school system is difficult to establish with great precision. In any event, what is perhaps more important is the Catholic parent's perception of the superiority of the parochial system. As Joseph H. Fichter pointed out in his *Parochial School: A Sociological Study*, a number of constraints work on the Catholic parent and orient him toward the Church school system. The Catholic school is, for example, the place where one learns what being a Catholic means; and in some instances the definition of a good Catholic is one who has actively participated in the parochial school system. The link between devotion and association with the parochial school remains strong.

Some relief for the public school system from the financial burden of the present relationship should come from the recent Federal legislation, which provides aid to the public schools for services rendered to parochial systems. Parochial leaders in Mittelville are taking steps to implement every aspect of the new legislation. It will allow them to broaden their program offerings and indirectly reduce the burden on the Catholic parent who must,

in effect, maintain two school systems. Preliminary discussion of ways to implement the new legislation's mandates have already begun between local diocesan representatives and public school administrators. Members of the Board of Education of the public schools have not been included in these discussions, however, and are largely unaware of the impact or meaning this legislation will have for both systems and for educational services in the city.

SEGREGATION

As the public sector prepares a program to desegregate the Mittelville schools, the parochial system is concerned to keep abreast of possible population shifts resulting from the new program. If, for example, the implementation of a desegregation plan in the public system should stimulate an increased enrollment in the parochial system, it is important to the latter to have advance notice so that adequate preparation for the increased population can be made. One would expect the parochial system to expand gradually during the coming decade in any event. They are already visibly expanding their secondary school facilities, since this is where the most enrollment pressure is felt. However, it is doubtful that changes in the public school system in the form of school desegregation will affect the enrollment picture to any large extent. The reasons for attending parochial school are primarily religious and educational, and perhaps only indirectly matters of racial preferences.* Pupil population shifting will continue, but it is likely that the movement is little more than a reflection of the larger population trends in the Mittelville regional area. The political setting in the city is increasingly favorable for the beginnings of school consol-

* *The Education of Catholic Americans*, by A. M. Greeley and P. H. Rossi; National Opinion Research Center, Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill., 1966.

idation on a regional basis, for example, and it is difficult even now to project the exact location or composition of the population two or three decades hence.

IMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The structure of the public and parochial systems and the pattern of their relationship over the past few years has and will continue to have an impact upon the nature of educational services in Mittelville. New Federal and state legislation, as well as proposed changes in the program and services of the public system, will insure the intensification of a relationship which already has consequences for the quality of education in the city.

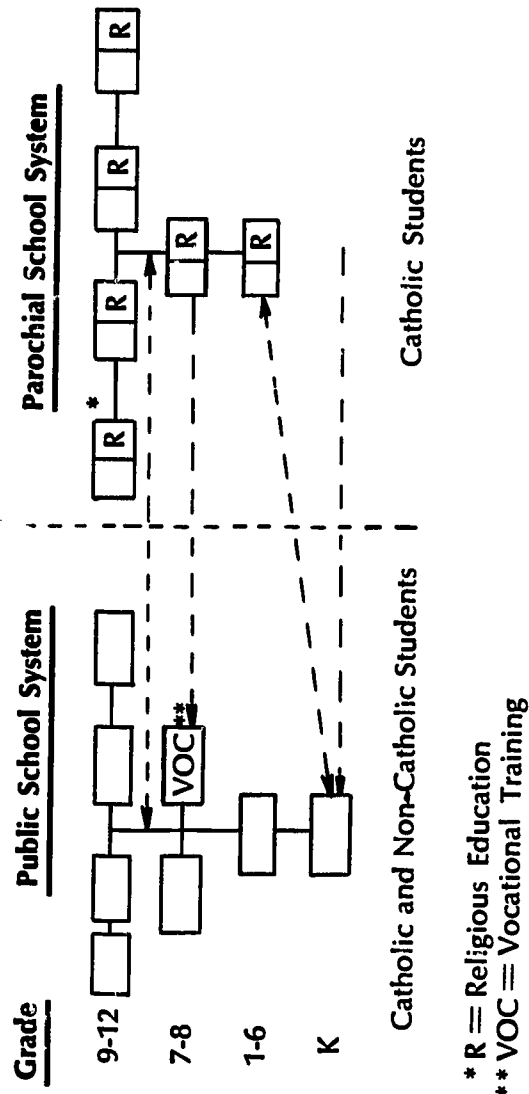
Toward the beginning of this essay, in the discussion of the composition of the pupil population, we suggested that the complete range of educational services was available only to one segment of the school age population, namely the Catholic youngster. Figure 2 illustrates the pattern of educational services available to the school-age youngster in the community.

This table, which is divided into two parts, shows the availability of educational services offered by both parochial and public systems. Catholic youngsters who reach school age may attend kindergarten in the public school system since the parochial system offers no early education program. From that point on, however, they may attend either parochial or public school for the remainder of their formal education. There are several ways of doing this. For example, a Catholic youngster may transfer back and forth between the two systems to take advantage of special programs offered at various levels by either system (indicated by the dotted line in the diagram). If he chooses to stay in the parochial system through the eighth grade, he may also take part in the vocational offerings of the public system. And as we have seen earlier, the Catholic youngster who reaches the ninth grade may

transfer to the public secondary school where the full complement of non-college programs is available. The statistics on student-transfer patterns suggest that a considerable amount of transferring of pupils occurs at all grade levels and it is not uncommon to find youngsters from the same family attending both systems at some point. About 20 percent of all transfers occur between the two systems.

The Catholic youngster and his family must pay a price for their freedom of choice, in the form of parochial school tuition as well as taxes for operation of the public schools. However, parochial school tuitions are based upon ability to pay and are normally under \$75 a year per pupil, hardly a large burden for the majority of Catholic families. (The addition of incidental ex-

Figure 2. Pattern of educational services available to the school-aged population by school system and grade level.



penses for uniforms and in some instances transportation must be added to the tuition charges.)

It might be argued that although there is inequality in the availability of educational services in the city, the majority of the population, which is upwards of 60 percent Catholic, has the widest range of educational services to choose from; and in a democracy, this is as it should be. This argument would appear to be creditable were it not for the effects of this choice factor on the nature of the programs offered in each system. As we have suggested earlier, the image of the Catholic schools as institutions where scholastic accomplishment is stressed, coupled with the parochial system's visible expansion of their secondary school facilities, serves increasingly to set the parochial system apart from the public system. As the parochial system becomes more clearly focused on academic accomplishment, the gradual flow of more skilled pupils to the parochial schools increases. The immediate result is that a relatively static, non-academic image develops around the public school system which gradually receives a larger proportion of less skilled pupils. The public system is on the receiving end of the parochial system's practices and must adapt its program to the needs and requirements of the pupil population it receives. In the public system, the presence of a greater proportion of less able youngsters than would exist in the absence of the parochial practices necessitates greater emphasis on non-college bound, remedial, and in many cases custodial programs for the non-motivated. Achievement levels in the public system are resolutely depressed and the failure and dropout rates are increased, as is the added expense of operating an expanded series of specialized programs to meet the special learning problems of the available pupil population. What is thought to be the finest academic program the urban area has to offer is continuously unavailable to the skilled non-Catholic segment of the school-age population. And further, the motivation generated from such a

program is denied those non-Catholic youngsters who are on the borderline of higher academic status.

It is clear that in this setting the presence of two systems has an impact on the pattern of educational services. Obviously, it would be impossible for this division of program and services to occur if a single educational system was serving the city. A single system would draw from the total pool of pupil resources and offer a complete range of educational services to the entire population. The present distribution of educational program and services in Mittelville supports the hypothesis that the nature of the student population available to a school system determines to a large extent the pattern of the program offered by that system. And as we have already seen, the reverse of this proposition also holds true in the presence of two parallel but unequal systems, i.e., the different patterns of educational services offered by each system determine the nature of the student population in that system.

The recent Federal and state legislation which will provide financial assistance for the public system and allow increased contact between the public and parochial systems will, in this instance, serve only to intensify the already skewed quality of the present relationship. By failing to provide any reciprocal sharing of services between systems, this legislation will allow the parochial system to widen the gap between it and the public schools and maintain its academic image while broadening its program. The only improvement the legislation will make in this relationship will be that the financial burden of the relationship will be reduced for the public schools. Stated another way, legislation which permits the expansion of the parochial system's use of public facilities and services while reducing the public expenditure does nothing to introduce a more equalized distribution of pupil population or service program for either system. It will continue to be impossible for the non-Catholic

Public and parochial

pupil to partake in the services offered by the parochial school system, while the Catholic youngsters will have increased access to the expanded services of the public system. It should increasingly be more attractive for the Catholic youngster to attend parochial school since in that way he will have access to all the benefits of both systems, while, in turn, the public system must look forward to an increased volume of less skilled pupils.

There appear to be at least two ways in which the present relationship between the public and parochial systems could be improved. The first of these involves the public system's plans to revise and update its program and services, and the second includes the prospect of the parochial system's decision to eliminate or alter a portion of its grade organization and offerings.

In fact, the Mittelville system is implementing a program for quality desegregated education in the Fall of 1966. This program will drastically alter and improve the quality of the public system. As was pointed out, the preliminary concern of the parochial school leaders is to determine the extent to which the desegregative aspects of the public system's plan would increase the white flight from the public system, thereby placing a sudden enrollment burden on the parochial school system. It is entirely possible, however, that the reverse would hold and that as the quality of the public system improved, an increasing number of Catholic youngsters, at the elementary level at least, would find the public school more attractive. To the extent that the public system is successful in luring back from the parochial system a number of the more highly motivated youngsters, the problem of imbalanced pupil population which exists under the present relationship would be reduced. However, I hasten to add that there is no firm evidence at this time to suggest that the development of either desegregative or quality aspects of a school system are primary determinants for transfer of pupils from one

school system to another.

A second possibility for changing the present relationship between the public and parochial systems is that the Catholic hierarchy may decide to discontinue a portion of their educational program in the city. Catholic educators across the country are reassessing their educational programs, and in some areas eliminating portions of their systems. For example, the parochial leaders may view the improvement of the public elementary schools as sufficient to warrant the elimination of their own program at that level. Financial considerations are important to parochial systems with limited budgets. Yet the relative wealth of the county in which this particular parochial system is located suggests that the financial concern may not be as pressing as some other factors.

Elimination of some portion of the parochial school program would result in a more balanced pupil population for the public schools. Unfortunately, in several instances where the parochial systems have made the decision to discontinue a portion of their program, they neglected to notify the public school system far enough in advance so that adequate provision for the new population could be made.

In any event, there is in both of the above mentioned possibilities the prospect for change in the present relationship between the public and parochial systems. Both changes would bring about a more balanced distribution of pupils across both systems, and allow a measure of increased efficiency in the provision of educational services in the city. The chances of either of these events occurring at this time, however, must remain entirely matters of speculation.

CONCLUSIONS

I began with the proposition that the presence of parallel education systems in an urban area has consequences for the form

and quality of educational services in that area. I have illustrated this proposition by describing the relationship between the public and parochial school systems in one city which I feel to be typical. However, my discussion is only preliminary and lacking as a complete picture of the quality and direction of the parochial school system. Incomplete though this is, the analysis suggests several points which should be addressed in future studies.

The relationship between the public and parochial school systems can be one which contains elements other than complementary sharing of facilities and services. Though two systems may appear parallel on the surface, their relationship may be dysfunctional to the structure and kind of educational services in the total area. Further, more than financial considerations are involved in the relationship, and I have tried to illustrate how the program and philosophy of the systems affect each other. The new Federal and state legislation is designed to reduce the financial burden inherent in the co-existence of public and parochial systems. But in some cases, certainly the one described in this paper, this legislation will serve also to intensify the differential nature of the present relationship and further detract from the quality of educational services in the area as a whole.

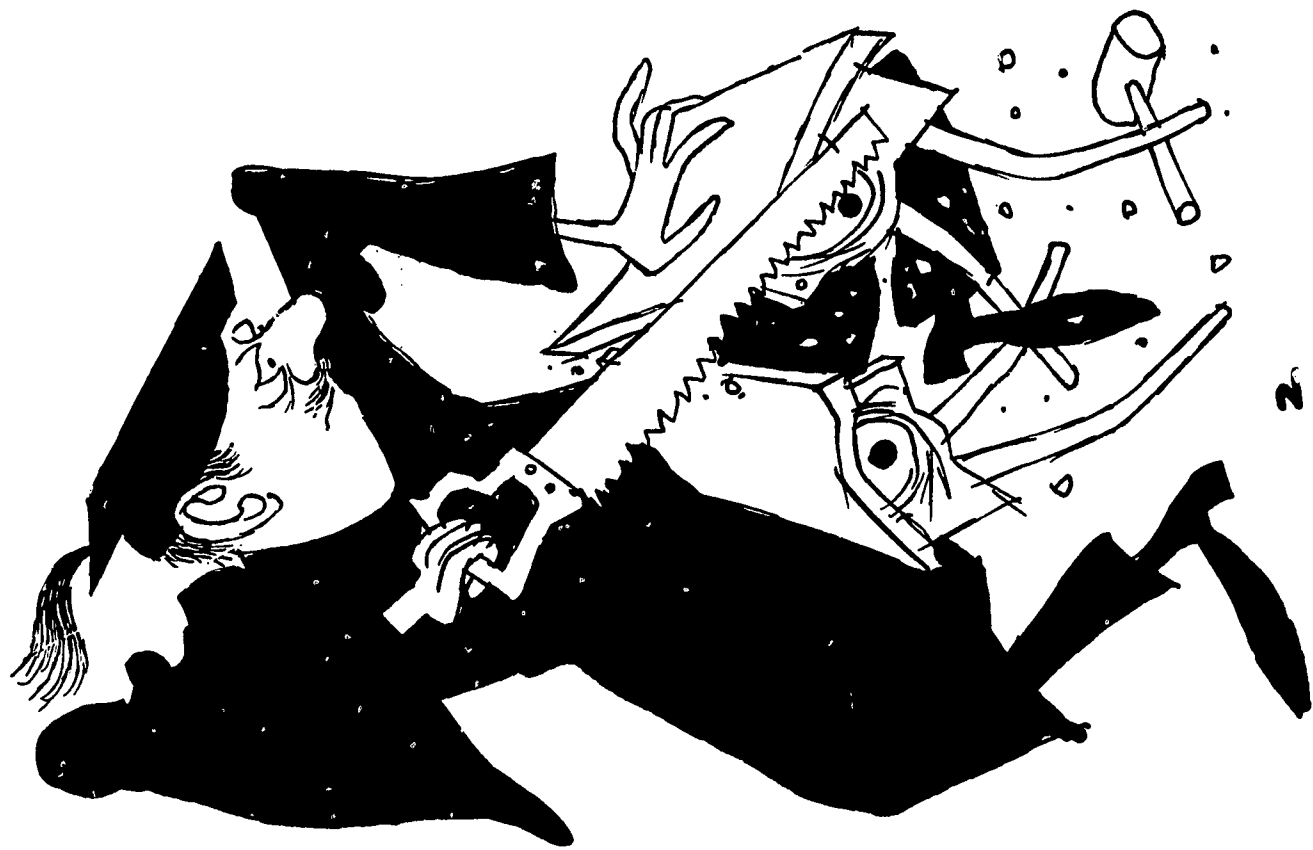
Given that two or more educational systems are present in any given urban community, it is important to determine under what circumstances the relationship between the systems can be considered constructive. It seems apparent from the description of the situation in Mittelville that dysfunctional elements are present. By allowing those aspects of the relationship to continue, the public system has no choice but to suffer the consequences. Let me emphasize again, however, that the relationship described has developed in a community where the Catholics have the largest share of the power base. The sheer size of the Catholic population dictates that their control be direct and complete. Most

of the major positions in the public school system, for example, are occupied by Catholics whose feelings toward educational services in the city can't help but be colored by their allegiance to both systems.

At some point, however, it must become apparent to parochial and public educators alike that the troublesome educational consequences of maintaining the present relationship are outweighing the advantages for a particular system. When, for example, the size and relative strength of one of the systems begins to influence the size and direction of the other, it becomes important to reevaluate the structure and goals of all educational services in the area. Failure of the two systems to develop an adequate exchange of ideas on education can reduce the effectiveness of that education for the entire population.

The responsibility for control and change seems clearly to rest with the primary educational system, the public schools. The private educational system is both free to exist and to order its program as it sees fit. But when their practices depress the public system, the latter is obligated to take appropriate action to insure the continuation of quality education for the entire population. The elimination of imbalanced programs for imbalanced student populations must be implicit in the philosophy of the urban public school system. As long as inequality of access to services and program is allowed to exist in the urban area, the hope for success of programs to eliminate racial imbalance and improve the quality of education in the public schools will remain small. The accomplishment of equal, quality education for a city which contains more than one educational system can be insured only if provision is made to go beyond mere financial retribution to include reciprocal use of selected facilities and services and continuing discussion focusing on the development of quality education for the entire population of the community.

The culturally deprived table a pilot study



-
1. Charting the parameters of the problem
 2. Interfacing action—research and innovative developmental efforts
 3. Evaluation, —closure
-



EXCHANGE

In keeping with the policy of The Urban Review to promote a vivid critical dialogue on the major issues of urban education, the editor welcomes serious response to all articles published in the magazine. This is the purpose of the Exchange column.

THE "600" SCHOOLS*

To the Editor:

In the June 1966 issue of "The Urban Review" Dr. Bernard Mackler writes about the "600" schools and makes recommendations for their improvement. As the principal of a "600" school I take issue with some of his statements which I feel must not go unanswered since they would give an inaccurate picture of these schools to those who are not familiar with them . . .

As a result of a study and comparison of three residential treatment "600" schools, Dr. Mackler draws many sweeping generalizations that he ascribes to the "600" day schools located in the city. I shall address my reply to the following charges made by Dr. Mackler:

1. The "600" schools are "segregated in the most radical way."
2. The "600" schools have no specifically designed curriculum.
3. No concerted effort is made to help a youngster in a "600" school.
4. Youngsters are "bounced" from one "600" school to another.
5. A number of youngsters do not present behavior problems at all.

Dr. Mackler's first revelation gives figures that indicate "segregation in the most radical way". He questions this segregation and implies middle-class thinking as the culprit. As a social scientist

I am certain that Bernard Mackler is familiar with the history of the Negro in the United States. Does Mr. Mackler really think that you can write off the damage to the personalities of these children by 300 years of racist rejection by blaming their presence in "600" day schools on middle-class values? If Dr. Mackler would spend a reasonable length of time in a "600" day school in order to find out what these youngsters are really like he would find self-hatred, inner confusion and distortion of the self-image that has prompted these children to war on society.

Yes, the "600" day schools are segregated. If one understands the relationship between personality and Negro minority status it is no small wonder that a small percentage of youngsters will be so scarred that they will not be able to cope with the demands of the neighborhood school but will need more and better of everything including therapeutic, clinical, and educational services.

Dr. Mackler charges that the "600" schools have no "specifically designed curriculum." He also states that "the emotionally disturbed child is the most difficult to evaluate, to treat, to educate in schools . . . and to define."

Does Dr. Mackler recommend a rigidly imposed curriculum that would be based on an undefinable personality? As a teacher who taught for many years in the "600" schools I would have revolted at any attempt to impose a centralized standard curriculum on my students or me. These schools do have a curriculum. Any teacher worth his salt knows that a good curriculum is . . . a necessary tool for the rehabilitation of disturbed children in a school setting. The "600" school curriculum follows the basic patterns of the regular schools. However, we take the child where we find him. The curriculum is modified for each child in terms of his emotional, academic and vocational needs at any time. The classroom teacher plans the remedial work, the new work, the methodology, and instructional experiences in terms of the needs, interests, and abilities of each child. Our curriculum, our methodology, our materials are as varied as the pathology of our youngsters. . . . We will never have a standardized curriculum handed down from above that will apply to the neurotic child, the psychotic child, the non-psychotic child, or any other vague psychiatric entity.

Dr. Mackler charges that no concerted effort is

** On Feb 17, 1966 the term "600" schools was dropped by the New York City Board of Education to be replaced by "Special Schools for Socially Maladjusted and Emotionally Disturbed Children."*

made to help a youngster in a "600" school. I do not know on what basis or what observations he has made to substantiate this generalization . . . Every attempt is made to infuse the teaching-learning experience with renewed hope; every method is used to provide for success experiences which would mitigate fears, tensions, and self doubts. I would concede that perhaps a clinical staff that consists of two full time guidance counselors, a psychologist, and a social worker that are assigned twice a week, and a psychiatrist who comes twice a month is not enough. However, these clinical resources are used constantly to help each youngster in the school. Case study conferences, individual diagnosis, and therapy plus group therapy sessions are on-going affairs. Liaison with outside agencies and clinics is maintained. There is constant feedback to the professional staff. Do we need more? Yes! Are we satisfied? No! Are we making a concerted effort? I can only ask Dr. Mackler to spend several days at P.S. 9 Queens (formerly P.S. 612 Queens) as my guest . . .

Dr. Mackler states that youngsters are "bounced" from one "600" school to another. Does he have any facts or figures to substantiate this statement? It is true that if a student moves from Queens to Manhattan or Bronx we transfer him to a "600" school within his borough. The regular schools do this too but it is not referred to as "bouncing." If Dr. Mackler means that youngsters are "bounced" from one school to another for disciplinary reasons I should like to make available to him the statistics and reasons for all admissions and discharges to the school of which I am principal. . . .

Dr. Mackler states that a number of youngsters do not present behavior problems at all but show severe academic retardation. From the moment a child enters a "600" day school, plans are made

for his eventual return to a regular school. The child's behavior is evaluated regularly and is the subject of case study conferences in order to determine readiness for return to a regular school. As a result of the supportive atmosphere and concerted effort made to help each boy, these children do make a successful adjustment to a "600" school. Many however are not ready to return to the regular school and to maintain themselves without massive support. No child is retained in a "600" school who stands a reasonable chance of maintaining himself in a regular school.

It may appear that in answering Dr. Mackler I may have implied that we are satisfied with the "600" day schools as they are now constituted. This is not so! There is tremendous room for improvement in recruitment, in curriculum, in staffing, in clinical staffs, in follow-up procedures, as well as in adequate and responsible search and experimentation. I welcome criticism but I do feel that criticism, to be constructive, should be based on research that can be substantiated and thoroughly evaluated if it is to contribute to the improvement of educational services of any kind. A write-and-run type of criticism neither does justice to the writer nor to the recipient of those whom it is meant to help. In addition, it merely serves to confuse a citizenry that has a right to be exposed to a more thorough analysis of problems and solutions of the education of the emotionally disturbed. Then and only then will we be able to achieve the public consensus that Dr. Mackler rightfully feels is necessary to improve this area of special education.

Albert Budnick

Principal

P.S. 9 Queens

(Formerly P.S. 612 Queens)

29

To The Editor:

The article written by Bernard Mackler brings to mind an important point that Dr. Mackler omitted from his paper. He is correct in his pointing out the segregated quality of the private institutions. He is also possibly correct in recommending that the Board of Education use its influence to change the intake policies of these institutions. However, the crime is not that these private institutions make such careful selection of their pupils, but that there is no public institution anywhere within New York State that has treatment facilities to care for these children. Private institutions depend upon their Boards of Trustee's interests in raising funds for the continuation of the institutions. They are, therefore, worried that if they were to become predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican, their boards will be unable to raise the needed philanthropic funds from the white community. This is, of course, only one part of the problems that private institutions have.

This is, however, a problem that the public faces when it recognizes that in order to establish adequate numbers of worthwhile public treatment institutions, the probable larger proportion of the institutional population would be Negro and Puerto Rican. This is due partly to the fact that the white community can afford to find its own facilities when treatment is necessary for its children. If the public were to provide enough treatment centers the problem of private institutions would be minimal. This is really the need that we have. An overwhelming percentage of children who need the care of a treatment facility away from home cannot be referred to one because of the dearth of such facilities.

I have had occasion to visit and talk with the personnel of some of the institutions that Dr.

Mackler mentions, I disagree with what seems to be his naive and benign approval of their programs. They can be immeasurably improved. The "600" day schools can be improved too. But Dr. Mackler's critique of the day schools is so full of false statements and inadequate comprehension that it is impossible to answer him without writing another entire article. For this reason, that part of Dr. Mackler's article should be ignored as to any serious consideration of his points.

David N. Shapiro
President, The "600" Schools Supervisors' Association

BERNARD MACKLER Replies:

I have written this letter in response to Mr. Budnick's and Dr. Shapiro's letters in the hope that our exchange, including agreements and disagreements, will go beyond the pages of *The Urban Review*. I am desirous of change and so are Messrs. Budnick and Shapiro; and in that spirit I will address myself to the comments, criticisms, and suggestions put forth in their letters.

I will address Mr. Budnick's letter first. His initial point is a critical one, for he states that the "600" schools are segregated and he explains why. However, he neglects one crucial point: that is, a segregated school is not just a Negro school; for a segregated school is a white school as well. He gives a rationale of why Negroes and, to a lesser extent, Puerto Ricans, may have more problems than whites, but how does he explain the existence of all white "600" schools. In my report I made mention of one such school which Mr. Budnick did not discuss. A second "600" school in the Bronx has a population of 96 percent white. How did this school become virtually all white? Mr. Budnick says that I imply middle class thinking

is "the culprit"; well, I am awaiting someone to explain who is (or are) the culprit(s) that can create two *all white* schools. The doctrine of separate schools for whites and blacks is at work here, and I can see no rationalization of this other than the self-defined "responsibility" of the New York City public school system. Again I repeat, these are not neighborhood schools, so segregated housing is not the reason. Nor do I see any fortuitous or accidental explanation for these schools being all or almost all white.

The second point he makes is more tricky, for I stated that the "600" schools have no specifically designed curriculum and Mr. Budnick took me to task. His answer is precisely what I expect from a sincere, hard-working, dedicated principal. No, I do not expect a rigid, systematic program. I, too, expect the program to be geared for each child and to be tailored to the needs of the child. So when Mr. Budnick says the curriculum follows the basic patterns of the regular schools, then I conclude, why not have these children taught in the regular schools? For Mr. Budnick is describing good teaching for any child, and can't we expect this to occur in a regular school so that stigmatization will not occur?

On point three, Mr. Budnick states that I said no concerted effort is made to help a youngster in a "600" school. I feel that I have been misunderstood here. Certainly, there are those teachers, principals, guidance counselors who dedicate themselves to aid youngsters in their "600" schools. But there is no concerted community plan, certainly not one that is comprehensive enough to include all the mental health agencies such as hospitals, clinics, the public schools, and universities for a community. If there is such planning, I do not know of its existence. No area—for example,

the North Bronx, or South Queens—has such concerted planning. I was trying to point out that multi-problem families are not planned with. One child with problems may indeed benefit from the dedicated efforts of an excellent teacher in a "600" school, but who plans and follows through for the whole family? The school, typically, does not and the community does not. Mr. Budnick speaks for his school, which has liaison with the courts and clinics, which is fine; but do the courts, clinics, the churches, hospitals, college officials all get together and discuss how to pool their collective services for an area so that duplication does not occur and so that families are not repeatedly diagnosed without treatment being offered?

Point four addresses the question of movement of "600" school pupils from school to school. By movement I mean not only day school to day school, but from residential institution to day school, from state hospital to day school, from regular school to day school. I have data for a number of "600" schools indicating that much movement occurs and not typically for disciplinary reasons.

Point five addresses the question of how many children in the "600" schools are not behavior problems but have learning difficulties. Here Mr. Budnick and I disagree in what we see, for if a public school principal sends him a child with "behavior" problems, I might interpret his problem as primarily learning, he might see it as behavior. Mr. Budnick knows better than most that "600" school principals have to accept a child because a regular day school principal or district superintendent assigns a child to their schools. Perhaps he has doubts as to the severity of the problem. Can he oppose the District Superintendent? Does he? Do all of his colleagues at the other

"600" schools? Perhaps we disagree on what we mean by learning problems and behavioral difficulties, and this creates the difference in our interpretations.

Dr. Shapiro's letter is a difficult one to address. He does not pose any questions for me to answer. He describes what I have omitted in the first two paragraphs, and I agree that it is a crime that no public institution exists in New York State to take care of Negro and Puerto Rican children on a par with private institutions. But why should we divert public monies to support private institutions which are not only segregated, but which can raise money to improve their services when they have to. Why not take the public money and support the public residential centers that offer services to all regardless of race, creed and color? This way public institutions will improve and private institutions will still provide their present services. If they drop in their services because of public funds being removed, perhaps then they will decide to desegregate.

The last paragraph of Dr. Shapiro's letter is odd. I did not approve of the institutional programs, *per se*, but was trying to compare three institutions and show the relative merits of each. Approval does not mean that improvement is not indicated. The last two sentences of Dr. Shapiro's letter, in which he refutes my article as it describes the day schools, leave me bewildered. I find no specific criticism, no specific refutation of what I wrote, and so I cannot reply to what was *not* said. I await his detailed criticism.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

An article by Lawrence J. Barnett in the May issue of The Urban Review criticizing current practices and resistance to change in vocational education prompted the following:

To the Editor:

Mr. Barnett's article, "Does education for work, work?" is to be commended for an attempt to infuse the spirit of John Dewey into current vocational education programs. In the process, he points to many serious problems that await solution. Unfortunately, a polemical tone creeps into many of his comments that, in this writer's opinion, seriously detracts from the value of the article.

1. *Mr. Barnett takes Dewey out of his historical context* — When Dewey in 1916 feared that vocational education would perpetuate existing social stratification and make for cultural impoverishment, he was looking at high schools which received less than 20 percent of American youth. To restrict a segment of this rather selected group to a "specific trade preparation" might be inappropriate and an injustice. Mr. Barnett must apply Dewey to a vastly changed world where, in New York City, over 90 percent enter high school and where, for a large segment of disadvantaged pupils, preparation for a specific trade would mark a significant rise in social and economic status and, perhaps, their only chance to enter a life of relative security and productivity.

2. *He does not provide for the wide range of pupil abilities* — If we grant the prediction that the world of work "will be essentially characterized by its demand for flexibility," the real "open question" is whether the substantial number of pupils, who our best teachers have not been able to bring

over above two or three years of reading retardation and for whom training for competence in a low-skill occupation is an achievement, will be more successful in a curriculum which aims at the achievement of transferable skills. Which ability level has Mr. Barnett in mind when he cites industry's needs for "skills and knowledge of a high level of sophistication"? Or when he endorses the program of Donald Super and C. B. DeCarlo to develop "various levels of competence in communication, computation, social science, logical reasoning, applied and theoretical science, and the humanities"? In this dream world of curriculum development, the semi-literate have miraculously disappeared. In calling for education for versatility, Mr. Barnett sidesteps the really interesting and difficult questions: Is flexibility teachable or is it a function of intelligence? Is "education for versatility" aimed at the lowest third of the ability spectrum, the dropouts and academic failures whom Mr. Barnett charges our schools have almost completely ignored?

Indeed, one is deeply puzzled when Mr. Barnett couples his call for "education for versatility" with a plea that comprehensive high schools welcome within its walls "para-high school" programs similar to Manpower Development and Training. This may be a fine idea. But it is strange for the proponent of "flexibility" and "versatility" to welcome into the high schools programs which are successful by virtue of their stress on *specificity*.

3. *Mr. Barnett misreads the handwriting on the wall*—The alarm raised by the specter of automation a decade ago left so deep an impression on some educators that they have remained unmoved by more recent evidence. Mr. Barnett takes as "the jumping off point" for "renovation" and "reconstruction" his statement that "the enormous social,

economic, and psychological consequences of national technological developments have been firmly established by writers from all sources."

The "Report of the National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress" of February 1966 reinforces re-evaluations of the early alarmist forecasts of the effects of automation when it says, "Concern has been expressed that the impact of technological and industrial change will drastically curtail employment opportunities for less skilled workers. The principal conclusion of the B.L.S. study, which takes into account the major technological changes in American industry that can be identified and makes a careful appraisal of their potential effects on employment, is that the overall demand for less skilled workers will not decrease over this 11-year period, although it will decline somewhat as a percentage of the total." (p. 29-30)

There are, undoubtedly, many considerations that point to the need to make many changes in vocational education, but those who still take the expected awesome results of automation as a jumping off point had better re-examine their authorities.

4. *He has an irrational dislike of the "middle class"*—Mr. Barnett beats the middle class unmercifully. He wants to phase out of vocational programs the "middle class bias—the notion of an occupation as a life work". He speaks of "the recalcitrance of middle class educators to participate in the education of other than middle class pupils."

Can Mr. Barnett be serious? Who, if not the middle class, have been the teachers of the children from the slums? Is failure to achieve satisfactory programs, ipso facto, a sign of recal-

citrance? By what definition is "the notion of an occupation as a life work" a middle class bias? Communist China and the Soviet Union must be dominated, in this respect, by middle class bias. Mr. Barnett doesn't tell us why, aside from being a middle class bias, occupation as a life work is sinful. Nor does he tell us what inspirational and motivating notion he would substitute for it. Shall our schools abandon other middle class biases, such as: the desirability of living within one's means, giving a day's work for a day's pay, etc.? One wonders whether it is becoming fashionable once again, as it was thirty years ago, to belabor the middle class.

5. *He is unfair to those he disagrees with*—For one who invokes the "humanist sensitivity" of John Dewey, Mr. Barnett does not quite match the standard of Dewey's philosophic detachment in debate. Those whom he differs with are pejoratively referred to, throughout the article, as "traditionalists" or "the Establishment." The High School Principals' Association in New York City is dismissed as "voices" that "speak for tradition." While admitting that the guidelines of Smith-Hughes had for fifty-five years dictated a rigid pattern of vocational education, Mr. Barnett takes New York City to task for having made only "the most trivial alterations" in the three years since the passage of the 1963 Act. He seems unaware of the work done and being done to basically change the vocational education program in New York. The Correlated Curriculum Project, the Chamber of Commerce Occupational Study, the Vocational Curriculum Study under 88-210 are some of the work going on locally in the ferment of change. Furthermore, he will find in the publications of the United States Office of Education a tremendous amount of on-going research in vocational education under 88-210 which will, we hope, point

the way to much needed reconstruction. Will Mr. Barnett allow us a little more than three years before he accuses us of the sin of "traditional practice" or "inertia"?

Samuel H. Halperin
Executive Assistant
To the Assistant Superintendent
For Curriculum and Instruction
New York City Board of Education

LAWRENCE J. BARNETT Replies:

I was gratified that Mr. Halperin was moved to reply so thoughtfully to my article. Lack of response from a qualified reading public is perhaps the most telling criticism of ali. I shall take this opportunity then to welcome him to the forum and look forward to continuing and broadening this long-overdue dialogue in New York City.

1. The suggestion that I have taken "Dewey out of his historical context" is a fascinating one with rather interesting implications for historians, philosophers, educators, social scientists, and analysts of the *realpolitik*. If relevance is to be understood within the limited parameters of current demography as Halperin suggests, then all germane reference is necessarily restricted to the utterances of contemporaries. There is rather an appealing facility in such a notion, but I would doubt its wide acceptance in the world of scholarship. My point in quoting Dewey, of course, was that he succeeded in conceptualizing an educational issue in a broad social, economic, and philosophical framework. This approach makes possible the placement of the issue in human scale and focus, and directs investigation and discussion in meaningful rather than trivial directions. Dewey's comments then are highly relevant and "in-context," particularly when employed as conceptual back-

ground for the study of patterns and instrumentalities of racial and ethnic segregation in public education. Thus, vocational education nationally may be generally observed on both sides of the *social predestination* fence; on the one side as a predominantly white *exclusive* program and on the other a cynically *inclusive*, predominantly non-white, "dumping ground."

2. This section of Halperin's rejoinder I found particularly provocative. Such a large number of profound differences are revealed or implied that my initial response suggested reply via a rather sizable annotated bibliography. This is further complicated by a semantic difficulty in some of his formulations. For example, he alludes to "the substantial number of pupils whom our *best teachers* have not been able to bring above 2 or 3 years of reading retardation." It is a well known fact that large numbers of pupils in New York City, particularly those in attendance in most Harlem schools, reveal lower than grade level reading skills. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that this deficiency increases with continued school attendance. What puzzles me is the *best teacher* component of his assertion. Quite apart from the formidable, as yet unsolved problem of identifying effective, much less "*best*" teachers, Halperin's claim is seriously disputed in fact. Senator Jerome L. Wilson (Dem.-Lib., Manhattan) commented on the failure on a New York State reading competence test of 65 percent of ninth-grade students at Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem. Among other questions, he sought answers to the following:

1. Why over one-third of the teachers on the school's faculty were *brand-new* and *completely inexperienced* . . . A figure way out of line with the proportion of new teachers at other schools?

2. Why there are to date many unfilled teaching positions which are being covered on a full-time basis by strings of *substitutes*?

3. Why many regular teachers in the school are teaching subjects they are *neither licensed nor accredited to teach*?

4. Why the severe shortage of administrative personnel in the school, which *requires taking teachers away from teaching* is not remedied?

Investigation into questions of the attitudes, experience, accreditation, absenteeism, license status, education, exit reasons, etc., of teachers in schools where large numbers of children manifest reading problems (primarily in ghetto schools) further contradict Halperin's claims. One such investigation revealed that the mean number of years of experience of teachers in segregated white schools was three times the mean number of years of experience of teachers in segregated Negro-Puerto Rican schools. Such studies have been and continue to be pursued by the Center for Urban Education as well as other research personnel and agencies and seriously challenge the "best teachers" assertion!

Halperin's reference to the "lowest third of the ability spectrum," semi-literacy, and arbitrary assignment of "dropouts and academic failures" to this category raises an almost endless series of definitional and conceptual questions, not to speak of questions of fact. Assuming normal distribution of the "spectrum" the "lowest third" would encompass the severely mentally retarded (trainables) the moderate and mild mentally retarded (educables) and run well into the "normal range". Current estimates suggest three or four percent of the population to be mentally retarded (75 or

below). This leaves ninety percent of the "lowest third" in the dull normal to normal range. Of these, about fifty percent are distributed between 90 and 95. The inescapable inference to be drawn from Halperin's remarks is that he would consign irrevocably some 310,000 New York City school children to educational, social, and personal inferiority. Of these, some 165,000 present I.Q. scores between 90 and 95. This dismal write-off is in sharp contrast to rather successful programs to develop reading skills with the "educable" mentally retarded I.Q., 50-75.

The term "semi-illiterate" is of course a "discussion stopper"! With literacy arbitrarily and variously defined, one is confronted by a continuum beginning with illiteracy (also arbitrarily and variously defined) and ending, let us say, with Bernard Shaw or Edward Dahlberg. Within these limits where is "semi" literacy? Some of my acquaintances would no doubt identify as "semi-literate" anyone unable to score high on a reading comprehension test based on *Finnegan's Wake*. In the context of vocational training, however, it would seem that a meaningful discussion of literacy would of necessity be tied to individual goals, objectives and job requirements, not proscriptively generalized.

With regard to the question which Halperin avers I "sidestep", i.e., "Is flexibility teachable or is it a function of intelligence?" I know of no one at this time who is able to delineate what is "teachable" or what is *not* "teachable". Nor do I know of anyone who will confidently define "intelligence" with sufficient succinctness to allow pursuit of the question in the terms suggested. Moreover, my feeling is that this "interesting and difficult" question is essentially an academic trap capable of generating volumes of socially useless pap. Concerning the query about "ability levels" I have in mind, Halperin

Center News

quoting me selects the very phrase which supplies the answer: "The program which is closer to Dewey's notions would help the pupil to develop various levels of competence in communication, computation, social science, logical reasoning, applied and, theoretical sciences, and the humanities." Indeed, I have clearly in mind a wide range of persons of varied ability levels more effectively and efficiently assisted by formal education in realizing their potentials for dignified and productive life involvement. I would suggest that our ability to nurture these potentials at all levels has been far from exhausted. In this regard Norbert Wiener's assertion that "Variety and possibility are inherent in the human sensorium—and are indeed the key to man's most noble flights—because variety and possibility belong to the very structure of the human organism" underlies my conviction that significantly higher levels of general social participation are unquestionably feasible.

If the choice is discrete, then "Barnett's dream world" must prevail over the rather morbid practicalism of Halperin's nightmare.

Lack of space precludes a complete treatment of the remaining items in Halperin's letter, however, with great brevity and much restraint I offer the following:

3. He misreads my reading of the economic "handwriting on the wall." The "spectre" I see is that of the historical reluctance of Americans to deal with trends while they are "trending" and the disastrous consequences of *ex post facto* expediency.

4. As a credit-card-carrying member of the middle class I am amused by the allegation that I "dislike" that worthy and substantial group. Moreover, I suspect that many non-middle class types would take umbrage with his assertion that "living within one's means" and a fair day's pay, etc. were the exclusive anomalies of the middle class.

5. I am not unfair to those with whom I disagree.

In July, the Center was designated by the United States Office of Education as a Regional Educational Laboratory under Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. As such, the Center becomes one of a series of organizations established throughout the country to conduct programs of research and development on a comprehensive regional basis, making use of the combined talents of university academicians, teacher training facilities and school personnel. The major purpose of the laboratories is to speed the flow of important and relevant research findings to the schools, and to foster the testing and demonstration of innovative ideas in educational practice.

In becoming a Regional Laboratory, the Center still maintains its independent status, as well as its original focus on educational services in metropolitan areas. Like all other urban services, education is today subject to extraordinary pressures created by demographic changes and the ever-increasing demands of its clientele. To examine and define the changes, and to discover means for satisfying the demands, when these are progressive—such are the concerns of the Center. More broadly, the Center sees its work as a significant part of the larger effort to develop educational forms more consonant with the pluralism of American society and more responsive to the greatest expectations of the individual.

Over the past year, the Center, operating under an absolute charter from the New York Board of Regents and with an interdisciplinary staff of approximately seventy-five, initiated research into several basic areas of educational planning and functions, among them the concept of the Educational Park and the relationship of educational achievement to occupational status. It also served as professional advisor to various clients such as the New York State Department of Education, for whom the Center did planning research in Buffalo, and the Boards of Education of several cities which requested the Center's aid in developing comprehensive plans to desegregate their schools. Funding of the Center's program came from a number of private foundations and, since September 1965, under a contract award from the Office of Education.

With the naming of the Center as a Regional Laboratory, the organization has expanded considerably. The region of its concern, as a Laboratory, includes the metropolitan area of New York City as far south as Newark, N.J., and as far north as Bridgeport, Conn. To the west, the area extends to Essex County in New Jersey, and to the east, Nassau County on Long Island. Approximately 13.5 million people live in this region, of whom 2.5 million are between the ages of five and nineteen. (As a private organization, however, the Center is not limited to this geographic area.)

The staff of over one hundred men and women are drawn from the academic community — sociologists, psychologists, city planners — and from the public school system.

The Director of the Center is Robert A. Dentler, who has taken a leading role in the planning and development of the organization from the beginning. A social scientist, his published work encompasses a wide range of studies with public policy implications: housing and urban renewal, the social-psychological effects of Cold War nuclear strategy, and the sociology of education. He also served as consultant to the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Education in the preparation of the "Allen Report" on segregation in the New York City public schools. Prior to coming to the Center he was executive officer of the Institute of Urban Studies at Teacher's College, Columbia, where he is still a full professor. As Director of the Center, he succeeds Chancellor Albert Bowker of the City University of New York.

The Center is organized in two divisions, the Community Division and the Educational Practices Division, whose activities are aided and supplemented by a communication resources unit and an administrative staff. In addition, there is a Development Section within the Community Division.

The Community Division, under the leadership of Robert Dentler, focuses primarily on

research and planning to further the integration in the school system of the diverse social, ethnic and cultural groups which exist in great variety in the region served by the Center as a Laboratory. To this end, the division seeks to examine not only the workings of the formal educational system but also how that system relates to and is influenced by other social and political institutions, and the informal system of education known as the mass media.

The first priority of the Community Division is to advance racial integration. Its studies in this area aim at examining the various participants in the integration process — the community, the school, the student — and the process itself, the policies and programs leading to successful integration. Accompanying these studies are others concerned with classroom problems. Throughout, the division moves its questioning focus back and forth between school and society in the effort to discover how the educational system affects integration and pluralism in the United States as a whole.

The Educational Practices Division, led by Nathan Brown, former District Superintendent at the New York Board of Education, concentrates on the task of finding and removing the basic inadequacies of curriculum and staff development that currently serve as blocks to the achievement of integration in the schools. In the curriculum area, the division's major

Center News

emphasis is on testing new approaches to the teaching of basic skills in primary grades. In its investigation of staff problems, the division endeavors to isolate the organizational factors that promote creative leadership. And as part of the effort to help teachers serve more co- gently and relevantly the changing population of city school systems, this division explores the nature of the learning process in urban schools and seeks to develop new techniques and procedures of instruction.

Although organizationally part of the Community Division, the Development Section under Mortimer Kreuter, a former teacher and principal in the New York public schools, strives to inter-relate the research efforts of the Laboratory's two divisions with a view to developing and testing in the field promising innovations as these emerge from the Center's activities.

This summary does less than justice to the full scope of the Center's work. While many of the projects are necessarily long-range, the Center is already committed in the day-to-day implementation of progressive change in the schools. Evaluation and results will be reported out regularly.

The Center maintains a Communication Resources Unit which produces *The Urban Review*. The Unit issues reports, monographs, bibliographies and books relevant to the research and development activity of the Center. It offers a liaison and public information service with the region, a library of key publications and materials in the field of urban education studies, and a service designed to utilize the whole range of visual media pertinent to the educational mission of the Center. For information about these activities, contact the appropriate staff member.

David E. Outerbridge:

Assistant to Director for Communications

Harris Dienstfrey:

Editor

Arthur Tobier:

Public Information

Thomas Scott:

Visual Media

A. Dan Wood:

Librarian

Cameron Cook:

Administrative Assistant

BIG CITY DROPOUTS AND ILLITERATES, by Robert A. Dentler and Mary Ellen Warshawer. 127 pp. \$3.00

The first book-length publication of the Center, this study examines the social and economic correlates of high school withdrawal and adult functional illiteracy. The examination is based on a multiple regression analysis that draws on data from 131 large cities throughout the United States. The study's main finding in regard to school withdrawal is that the lower the level of economic advantage and growth within a city, the higher the dropout rate. The authors also examine the cities where the rates of withdrawal and illiteracy are higher than expected, and discuss the implications of their findings for federal, state, and local programs designed to combat these problems.

Copies of this publication may be purchased directly from the Center for Urban Education, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, N. Y. 10036.

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 4

